

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TEGUCIGALPA 001466

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/CEN, DS/OP/WHA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/30/2014

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [ELAB](#) [PHUM](#) [SOCI](#) [PREL](#) [HO](#)

SUBJECT: MULTIPLE PROTESTS CONVERGE, MADURO'S REACTION IS SKITTISH

REF: A. TEGUCIGALPA 1439

[1](#)B. TEGUCIGALPA 1434

Classified By: Political Counselor Francisco Palmieri;  
Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: On June 29 Honduran President Ricardo Maduro went on national television to explain the Government of Honduras' (GOH) position after teachers' unions rejected the latest government offer. Protests continue (refs A and B) and both sides are at loggerheads. Also, the March for Life (Marcha por la Vida) culminated in Tegucigalpa on June 30, as marchers/protesters arrived from four points from across the country to draw attention to the GOH's inability to protect Honduras' environment. To date, all protests have been peaceful and there are no reported confrontations between police and protesters. On July 1, anti-globalization protesters will march in conjunction with the second largest labor federation in a separate protest. The Maduro government's skittish reaction to this convergence of popular protests has not helped to reassure the public, which increasingly disapproves of the President's job performance. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (U) On June 29 Honduran president Ricardo Maduro, with some 200 prominent political and business supporters behind him, went on national television to explain the GOH's position after teachers' unions rejected the latest government offer to end their five-week long strike. The GOH offered the teachers a USD 11.5 million settlement package. Because of its agreement with the IMF, the GOH will not meet the teachers' core demand to restore wage increases under the previous compensation law. When that was rejected, the GOH offered to enter into arbitration with the teachers' unions, an alternative which was also rebuffed. Both sides are now at loggerheads and it is unclear how the standoff will end. On June 29, some 3,000 teachers marched peacefully on the Casa Presidencial.

[1](#)3. (SBU) The GOH also remains nervous about the March for Life (Marcha por la Vida) which commenced June 24 and culminated in Tegucigalpa today (refs A and B). The March's organizer, Father Andres Tamayo, a Salvadoran Catholic priest who resides in Olancho and heads the Olancho Environmentalist Movement (MAO), estimated that eventually ten thousand people would participate in the march, although the actual figure was between 500 and 1500. As of 1500 local time, these marchers were joined by approximately 2,500 supporters in Tegucigalpa. The marchers have gathered peacefully in front of the National Congress and are seeking an audience with GOH officials to present their list of grievances. The march was organized to draw attention to the GOH's inability to protect Honduras' environment. Previous rumors that the marchers might demand President Ricardo Maduro's resignation have thus far not panned out. As an example of the government's skittishness, the Casa Presidencial was evacuated as a precautionary measure late in the afternoon. A number of prominent U.S. VIPs are participating in the march, including Representative Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) in an unofficial capacity.

[1](#)4. (U) The General Federation of Workers (CGT), the second largest labor federation in Honduras, and Popular Block (BP-Bloque Popular) are planning additional demonstrations against the Honduran government for July 1 and 2. Their agenda is aimed to support their more traditional political demands. They plan to protest against globalization, privatization of government services, the CAFTA, foreign debt, and the IMF and World Bank. The CGT chose July 1 for its protest because it is 60 days after its May Day (May 1) march where they presented their original declaration. The July 1 protest is scheduled for Tegucigalpa, while on July 2 they hope to expand the protest to other cities in Honduras, such as San Pedro Sula. CGT President, Daniel Duron, told PolCouns that the march would be peaceful but is designed to keep pressure on the government. The CGT has 20,000 teachers in its federation and also represents other public sector unions. Duron said that the IMF agreement is a serious problem for all public sector unions because of the stringent caps it places on the public sector wage bill. Duron claimed that if the government keeps to those caps, the unions would not see significant wage increases for some years into the

future. He indicated that the CGT plans to keep the pressure on the government to force greater salary concessions for all its members, not just the teachers.

15. (C) Of some additional concern is the decision by the BP to move up a separate protest scheduled for next week to join the CGT marches this week. The leftist BP, which most likely receives funding from international sources such as Cuba, has been historically more willing to employ confrontational tactics. Duron acknowledged there was a greater risk of violence with the BP's participation, but said that the CGT's agenda was peaceful and that it would not seek to provoke the government.

16. (C) Comment: President Maduro and his government remain very concerned about the situation, hence his national television address on June 29 flanked by the nation's governmental, political and economic elites. They are particularly skittish about the plurality of &popular8 protests and the possibility that these forces could come together in a meaningful way to threaten the government's stability. To date, these groups do not appear to be effectively coordinating their activities, according to labor and NGO sources. However, these groups do appear to be gaining confidence from each others' events. Finally, independent political analysts and a pollster concur that the President's popular support is extremely weak ) less than 20% of the population approve of his job performance. His political capital is low, with some of his own party unwilling to support him publicly. Given his private reaction and his administration's concerns about this modest but increasing level of popular discontent, we are also beginning to wonder about the President's resolve to manage this situation to a successful conclusion. End Comment.  
Palmer